

FACT SHEET

FINAL AMENDMENTS TO THE AIR TOXICS STANDARDS FOR SYNTHETIC ORGANIC CHEMICAL MANUFACTURERS

ACTION

- On December 15, 2006, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) made a final decision to retain without modification its Clean Air Act rule that limits emissions of toxic air pollutants from synthetic organic chemical manufacturers.
- EPA analyzed emissions from these facilities after implementation of the 1994 air toxics rule and determined that the risks to human health and to the environment are low enough that further controls are not warranted.
- EPA also assessed whether new methods for emissions control have become available since 1994, and did not identify any advancements in practices, processes, or control technologies.
- EPA issued the air toxic standard for synthetic organic chemical manufacturers, known as the Hazardous Organic National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (HON), in 1994. This rule is one of 96 rules called maximum achievable control technology (MACT) standards that require 174 industry sectors to eliminate 1.7 million tons of 187 toxic air pollutants annually.
- The HON standards reduce air toxic emissions by approximately 90 percent from process vents, storage tanks, equipment leaks, wastewater systems, and transfer racks at 238 large chemical manufacturers nationwide.
- The Clean Air Act requires EPA to assess the risk remaining after the application of the 1994 MACT standards. These are called residual risk assessments.
- The Clean Air Act also requires EPA to review and, if necessary revise, the 1994 standards by taking into account developments in practices, processes, and control technologies.
- The final action responds to public comments on the residual risk assessment and technology review and announces EPA's final decision to take no further action to revise the standards.
- The final action clarifies several provisions. The rule:
 - Requires facility operators to assess whether a wastewater stream is still covered under the rule after a process change;
 - Removes the chemical methyl ethyl ketone from the rule. EPA deleted methyl ethyl ketone from the air toxics list on December 19, 2005;
 - Waives reporting requirements for offsite cleaning or reloading facilities that take part in the vapor balancing control option for storage tanks.

BACKGROUND

- The Clean Air Act requires EPA to regulate toxic air pollutants, also known as air toxics, from large industrial facilities in two phases.
- The first phase is “technology-based,” where EPA develops standards for controlling the emissions of air toxics from sources in an industry group (or source category). These MACT standards are based on emissions levels that are already being achieved by the better-controlled and lower-emitting sources in an industry.
- Within eight years of setting the MACT standards, the Clean Air Act directs EPA to assess the remaining health risks from each source category to determine whether the MACT standards appropriately protect public health. This second phase is a “risk-based” approach called residual risk. Here, EPA must determine whether more health-protective standards are necessary.
- Also, every eight years after setting the MACT standards, the Clean Air Act requires that EPA review and revise the standards, if necessary, to account for improvements in air pollution controls and/or prevention.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- Interested parties can download the notice from EPA's web site at the following address: www.epa.gov/ttn/oarpg/t3pfpr.html. For additional information about the notice, or the HON, visit <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/atw/hon/honpg.html>.
- Today's final rule and other background information are also available either electronically at <http://www.regulations.gov/>, EPA's electronic public docket and comment system, or in hardcopy at the EPA Docket Center's Public Reading Room.
 - The Public Reading Room, which was temporarily closed due to flooding, formally reopened on November 6, 2006. The Reading Room is located in the EPA Headquarters Library, Room Number 3334 in the EPA West Building, located at 1301 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC. Hours of operation are 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM Eastern Standard Time (EST), Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays.
 - Visitors are required to show photographic identification, pass through a metal detector, and sign the EPA visitor log. All visitor materials will be processed through an X-ray machine as well. Visitors will be provided a badge that must be visible at all times.
 - Materials for this final action can be accessed using Docket ID No. OAR-2003-0161.